

CAPSULE
LEWIS ROBERTS HOUSE (SITE) AND DAIRY

The 1850's maps which exist for this area show "Lewis Roberts" on this site. The Robert's house is survived only by a photograph and one of its dependencies. It was replaced by a handsome Georgian Revival house in 1911. The early 20th century photograph taken of the house prior to its demolition is a snapshot taken at some distance. It shows a Mansard roof building which probably had stone walls. The popularity of the Mansard after 1860 and the presence of the Roberts on this land since the 1820's suggest that an earlier building was Victorianized.

Although there is archaeological value to this property the only pre-modern physical evidence is a stone dairy and an ice pond. The pond is man-made but of uncertain date; the dairy is at least as old as the Mansard building in the photograph. The 13 foot by 14 foot gable roofed structure is situated on a spring fed stream and was used for the cooling of dairy products produced on the farm. Its tapered vertical slit vents give it an early appearance. With "delivered" milk having already become obsolete this little building is instructive of an even earlier means of food production.

In 1896 it was part of a complex which included a dwelling, stable, hen house and ice house as well. The Roberts dairy dates from a time when the Towson area was part of rural America and a very young United States.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Lewis J. Roberts House Site and Dairy

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Walnut Hill Rd.

CITY, TOWN

Towson

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Ninth

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Baltimore

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

___STRUCTURE

☒ SITE

___OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

___PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

___BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___IN PROCESS

___BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

___OCCUPIED

☒ UNOCCUPIED

___WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

___YES: UNRESTRICTED

___NO

PRESENT USE

___AGRICULTURE

___MUSEUM

___COMMERCIAL

___PARK

___EDUCATIONAL

___PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___ENTERTAINMENT

___RELIGIOUS

___GOVERNMENT

___SCIENTIFIC

___INDUSTRIAL

___TRANSPORTATION

___MILITARY

___OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Constance C. Owings

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

Walnut Hill Rd.

CITY, TOWN

Towson

___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21204

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Courts Building

STREET & NUMBER

Liber #: 971

Folio #: 579

CITY, TOWN

Towson

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___FEDERAL ___STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION**CONDITION**☐ EXCELLENT☐ GOOD☒ FAIR☐ DETERIORATED☐ RUINS☐ UNEXPOSED**CHECK ONE**☐ UNALTERED☒ ALTERED**CHECK ONE**☒ ORIGINAL SITE☐ MOVEDDATE March, 1979**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

One of the sites appearing on the 1852 Chiffelle map of the Towson area is that of "Lewis Roberts" being only a short distance to the Southeast from the intersection of Joppa Road and "Powder Mill Road." The L. J. Roberts estate is indicated clearly on the Hopkins Atlas of 1877 and is called "Walnut Hill." The main house was destroyed in 1911 and replaced with the fine Colonial Revival structure which stands today. The original farm is survived by an early spring house, ice pond, at least two archaeological sites and a photograph of the old house.

Mrs. James Owings, whose maiden name was Carey, was born at Walnut Hill in the old house and still lives here today in the house her father built in 1911. She is a valuable source of information. Her father, George Gibson Carey, acquired this property in 1903. Mrs. Owings recalls that the family once found a "Roberts" tombstone beneath the porch of the old house which was later discarded "in the old berry patch near the barn" (Southeast of the house). The decision was made to tear down the old house and build the new one after she had lived in the old house as a child. Her father hired George Morris to build the fine home that is there today. According to Mrs. Owings the 1911 house was situated slightly further North than the old one so that the foundation of the present south wall might incorporate that of the old north wall. Examination of the cellar shows no definite pre-modern materials. Mrs. Owings is certain that the stone spring house at the bottom of the hill East of the house is a survivor of the earlier farm as is the nearby ice pond. A snapshot with the old house in the background and the Hopkins Atlas of 1877 give some idea of what the farm looked like one hundred years ago. In the picture one can see a blurred light colored building with a Mansard roof.

Mrs. Owings seemed certain that she had heard that the Roberts did not build the original house but that they had acquired it from an earlier owner, possibly the Coles. This suggestion and the appearance of Lewis Roberts on the 1852 map leads one to suppose that the Mansard roofed structure in the photo is an older building which had been Victorianized in the 1860's or 1870's. The house was perched high on a hill that is in fact adorned with some rather large walnut trees.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

Like the present residence the original house commanded a tremendous view of the Greenspring Valley to the Northwest and of all of the Rider properties directly below. The house could be seen as well and it was probably no accident that by the 1870's there were three large and quite fashionable mansard style homes within sight of each other with L. J. Robert's fancied-up house being one of them. Although smooth and light in appearance in the snapshot Mrs. Owings recalls that the old house was of heavy stone construction and that its thick walls had to be blasted down. The spring house is constructed of brownish gneiss common to this area. By the 1870's the house may have been stuccoed. The Bromley Atlas of 1898 does not show smaller outbuildings such as meathouses, spring houses or privies but it does show the location of barns and stables. This map shows the main house to be L-shaped with north and west wings and two outbuildings spaced at equal distances on a line to the southeast. The fartherst is a barn which Mrs. Owings says is survived only by the ruins of a stone foundation.

Dairy

The dairy is down the hill on the east side of the house and utilizes a spring-fed stream which flows on down to the bottom of the hill. This little structure is made of stone and measures approximately 14 feet (South) by 13 feet (East). It faces the house and is vented in the sides by the slit vents seen in 18th century barns. The front of the building has an entrance which was reached by sunken steps with a well opening and trough-like those recorded at Epsom Plantation and Hunt's Meeting House. The back of the building has been vandalized, obliterating either the vent or window that was there.

The building is made of uncoursed stone and is capped by a gable-end roof that is a replacement. The lintel over the entrance and the sills embedded beneath the vents are hewn. The interior was plastered and whitewashed.

A short distance upstream there is a small pond which Mrs. Owings calls the ice pond. It is a visual reminder of the fact that Walnut Hill is a survivor of that period when the Ruxton-Riderwood area was genuinely rural and not a garden suburb.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

BA-1774

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES Second quarter - 19th century BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Baltimore County Land Records

"Map of the City and County of Baltimore" J. C. Sidney, 1850 and Robert Taylor, 1857

Baltimore County Will Records

Baltimore County Tax Assessment Records

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATAACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5.25**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

See Attachment

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

ORGANIZATION

WAYNE C. NIELD, II
HISTORIC TOWSON, INC.

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

CHAIN OF TITLE FOR LEWIS J. ROBERTS HOUSE SITE
Parcel 630, Map 69

<u>LIBER</u>	<u>FOLIO</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>GRANTOR</u>	<u>GRANTEE</u>
971	579	April 13, 1936	George G. Carey, Jr. et al	Constance C. Owings
Beginning...intersection of center line of an avenue 30' wide with the center of another avenue 25' wide being laid out on a plat of Walnut Hill (Plat Book 2/31)...said 25' avenue being the easternmost outline of land by deed dated May 6, 1903, Land Record 267/187...Henry S. Dulaney & wife to George G. Carey, Jr. Containing 5.25 acres.				
267	187	May 6, 1903	Henry S. Dulaney & wife	George G. Carey
All that tract near Sherwood station on the N.C.R.R. known as "Walnut Hill" containing 21.7/8 acres.				
259	293	March 6, 1902	George B. Roberts & wife	Henry S. Dulaney
Will- 11	323	April 25, 1895	Lewis J. Roberts	George B. Roberts (son of Lewis)
WG 194	459	August 6, 1828	Isaac G. Roberts	Lewis & Susan Roberts
WG 194	393	August 6, 1828	Lewis J. Roberts Susan Roberts	Isaac G. Roberts

This land was bequeathed by John Cole (former husband of Susan Roberts) to Susan Roberts by Last Will & Testament dated January 6, 1817.

LAST WILL & TESTAMENT - LEWIS J. ROBERTS

Lewis J. Roberts

Will Book 11 folio 323 April 25, 1895

To son George B. Roberts:

"...the home place known as "Walnut Hill" consisting of about
21 acres...described on plat....by Charles B. McClean

Daughter - Mary E. Havenner - Lot # 9 on plat 7.05 acres.

deceased son Robert R. Roberts
son William

Tax Assessments

1876 Tax Assessment Record for Baltimore County District 9

Lewis J. Roberts

Tract on Joppa Rd. at Rider N.C.R.R. 110 a. @ \$ 110

Improvements double stone dwelling \$ 3,500

Barn & outbuildings \$ 100

Furniture Live Stock

Carriages & Harness Wagon & implts.

1896 Tax Assessment Record for Baltimore County District 9

Roberts, Louis J.

Rider P.O.

54 acres near Sherwood N.C.R.

Improved by Buildings \$ 2,000

3 Horses @ \$ 40

one cow

Vehicles

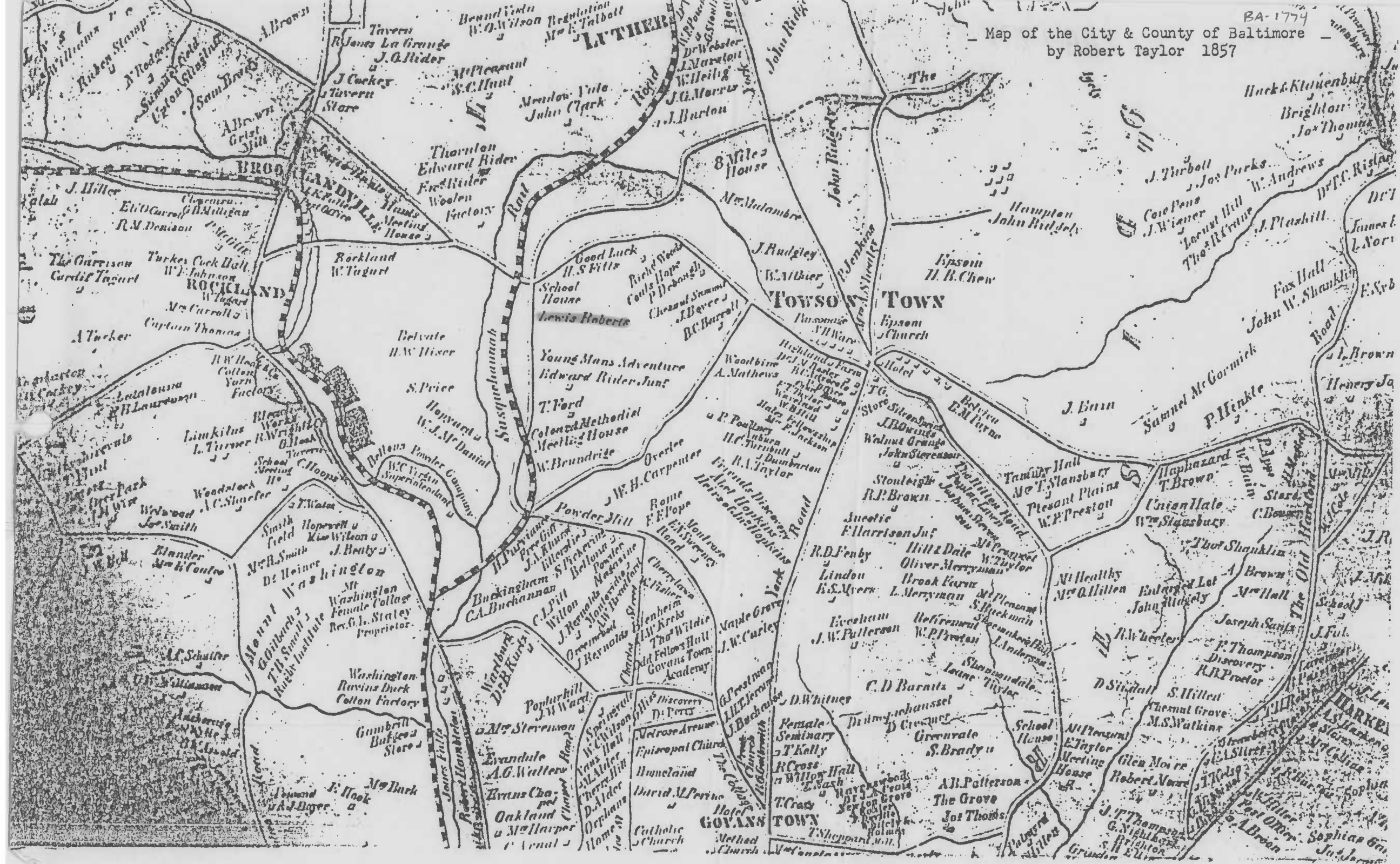
Furniture & c.

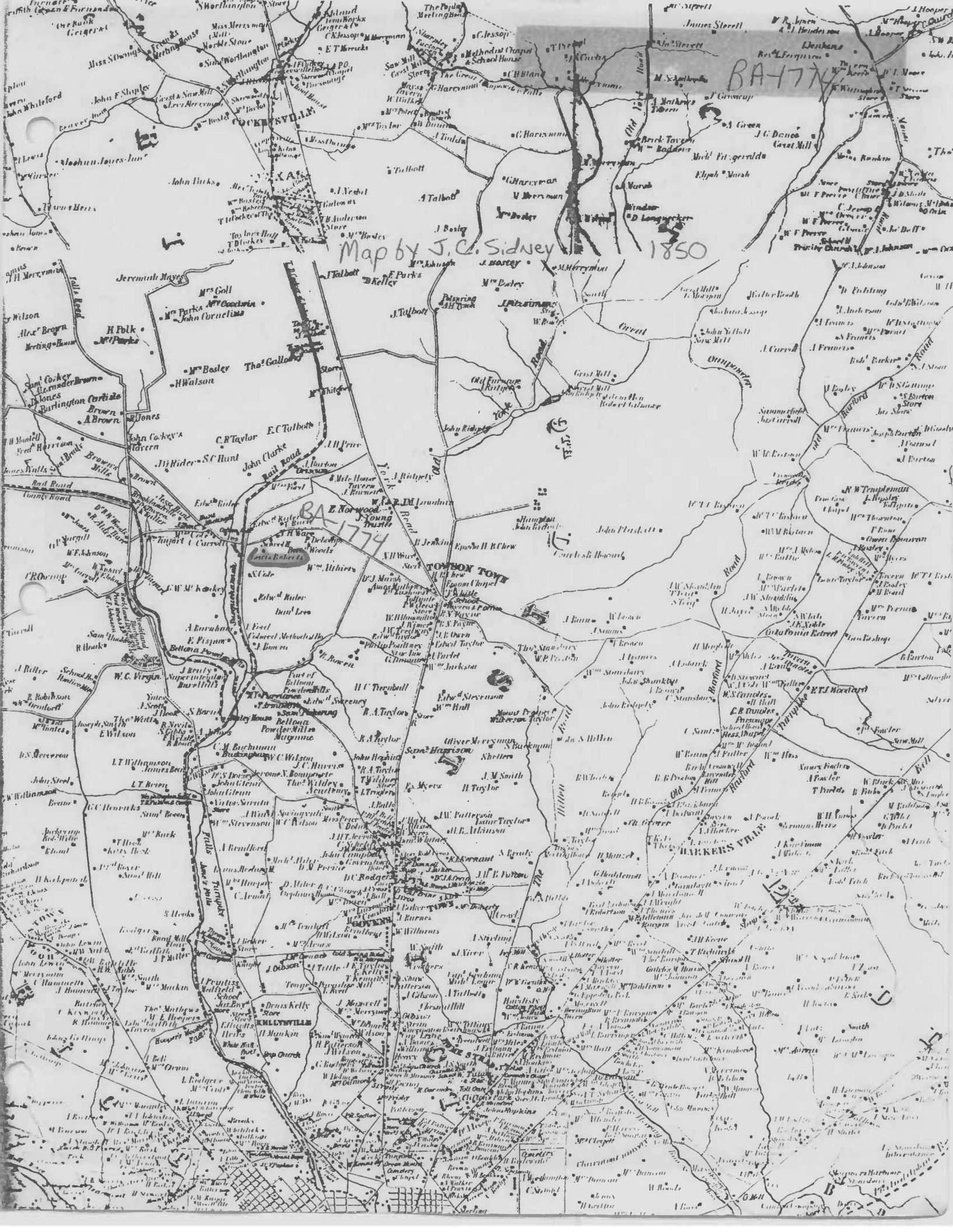
Roberts, Robert R.

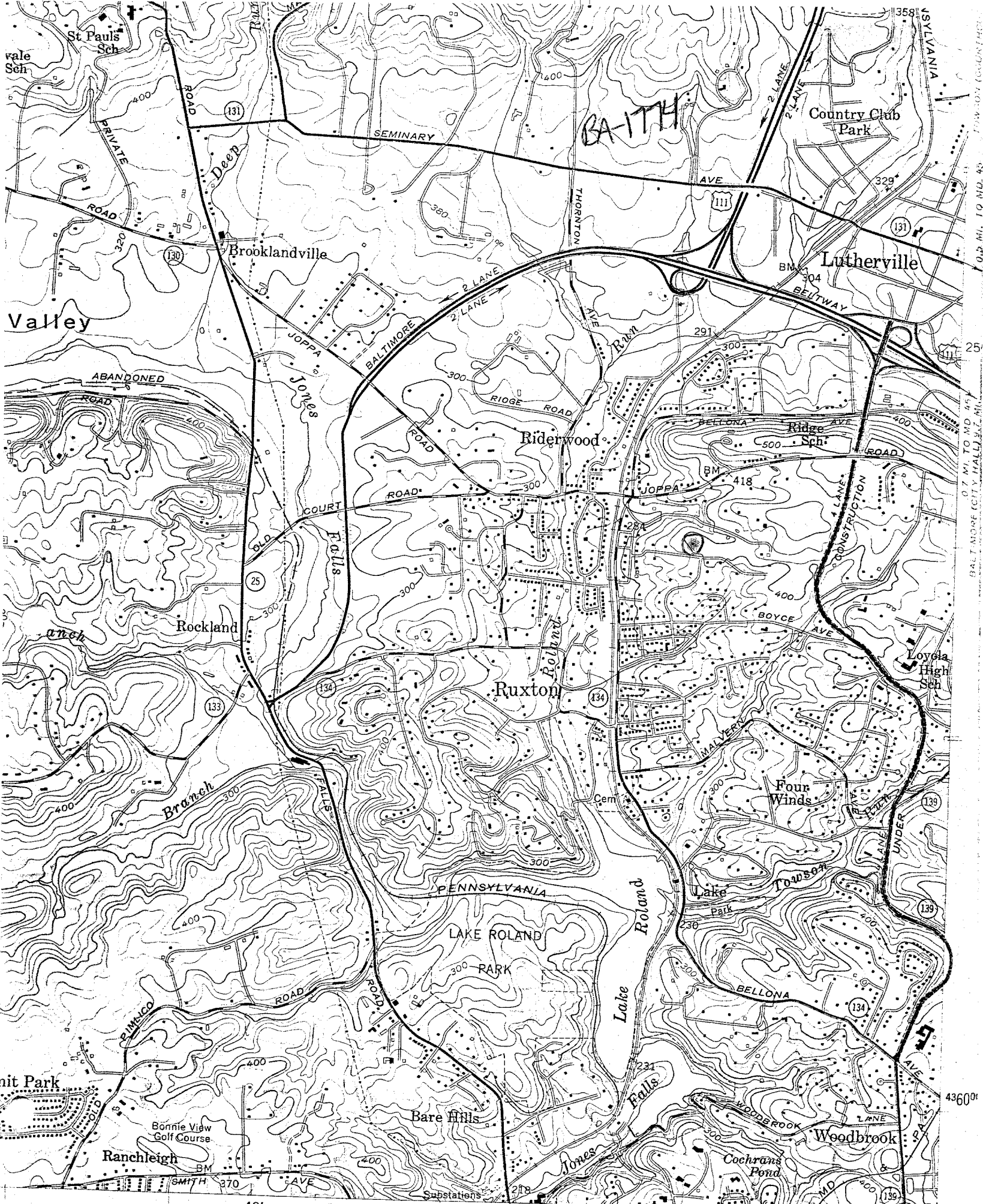
1896:

Three acres, 40 sq. perches, 300 yards East of Bellona Ave.
 $\frac{1}{4}$ mile South of Sherwood Station

Dwelling
Stable
Hen House
Spring House
Ice House









BA-1774

SPRING HOUSE-
LEWIS J. ROBERTS SITE

W. NIELD
3/79



BA-1774

ICE POND-
LEWIS S. ROBERTS SITE

W. NIELD
3/79